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ABSTRACT

International understanding, as an objective of the study of modern languages at the secondary school level, is emphasized due to recent advances in linguistic science and the trend toward interdisciplinary approaches to language study. Special attention is directed to the realization that language and culture are inextricably interwoven and to the design of a curriculum which would develop international understanding as well as communication skills. Other related topics discussed are: (1) native speakers, (2) international contracts, (3) audiovisual materials, (4) role playing, (5) foreign atmosphere, (6) current events, (7) reading, and (8) activities in correlation with other subjects. Curriculum planning, resources for teachers, definition of foreign language study objectives, and urgent needs in the area are also examined. (RL)

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HOW CAN MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING?

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EXPERIENCE in direct communication through speech or writing, imaginative identification with the people whose language is used, a feeling of personal involvement, induction into a different thought process and cultural medium—these are the ways in which modern foreign language study can make a significant and indispensable contribution toward international understanding.

Although understanding of other peoples must rest on information, factual knowledge alone does not bring understanding; therefore, to collect all sorts of facts *about* a people, to learn a great deal about their language, their history, political system, social practices, art, and other cultural elements, does not substitute for the experience of learning to react *in* the language and thus actually to *participate* in a different culture. Without a working knowledge of their language one is insulated from other people.

Effective language teaching is characterized by an awareness that language is itself an integral part of the behavior system of a people and at the same time a means for the expression and summing up of this system or culture. Every stage of foreign language learning must relate in some manner to the life and civilization of the people because the linguistic forms belong in a frame of reference which is different from that of the learner. Early in the beginning course, even the first day, the student should begin to realize that the new words and language forms symbolize

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experiences, attitudes, and points of view unlike those which give meaning and connotations to corresponding forms in English. The more skill he develops in the use of the language, the greater should be his progress toward a real understanding of the foreign people. This is why a course in general language, although useful, is not enough, and why constructed languages such as Esperanto, not being rooted in any culture, can never go beyond the code function of language.

There has not been a time, presumably, in the history of modern language teaching in the United States when secondary-school courses of study did not state or imply that one of the objectives of the program was to foster understanding of the people whose language was being studied. Until recently this objective was seldom defined clearly, and more often than not it was regarded in practice as something quite incidental to the main purpose of the instruction. Language teachers generally consider it self-evident that certain cultural insights can be gained only through active experience with the foreign language, but they have found it extremely difficult to explain this outcome or to tell what they do to achieve it.

A recent questionnaire study (John B. Carroll and others, "The Place of Culture and Civilization in Foreign Language Teaching," *Reports of the Working Committees,* 1956 Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) sought to find out how language teachers define the cultural objective, how important they consider it to be in introductory courses, and whether they feel that they are adequately achieving this purpose. All shades of opinion were expressed (3), but a striking thing about the results is that high-school teachers, public and private, tend to rate nearly all aspects of the cultural objective as more important than do college teachers. A possible explanation is the high-school teachers' greater concern with general education and the realization that, since few secondary schools offer advanced foreign language classes, introductory courses provide virtually their own opportunity to foster cultural understanding through the language. The most highly valued aspects of the objective were "appreciation of how ideas are differently expressed in a foreign language, with recognition of the inherent difficulties of translation" and "an increased respect and tolerance for the ideas, values, and achievements of a foreign culture."

It has also seemed obvious to language teachers that direct communication establishes a rapport which is utterly lacking in interpretation even when simultaneous, but they have frequently defeated their own purposes in this aspect of language teaching by requiring students to work with a set of abstract grammatical rules before they have acquired an ability to communicate in the language. Since in the past teachers generally made no sustained effort to achieve the cultural objective and too often traveled circuitous routes in the development of functional skills, many students—far too many—in language classes ended their study with the same naive assumptions they started out with: that learning a new language is simply

a matter of recording one's own, that languages are alike except for the words, that thought and ideas are universal and can be put into words by all languages in much the same way. They never gained, therefore, the basic concept that language and culture are inextricably interwoven, that speakers of different languages see relationships and interpret experiences in very different ways, that language not only conveys thought but also shapes it, that a foreign language leads the learner into an entirely new world of tradition and thought and feeling.

Definition of Objectives

Language teachers, along with those in other fields, are rethinking their objectives and trying to devise effective ways of achieving them. In 1953 the Steering Committee of the Foreign Language Program of the Modern Language Association of America enunciated the following:

The study of a foreign language, like that of most other basic disciplines, is both a progressive *experience* and a progressive acquisition of a *skill*. At no point can the experience be considered complete, or the skill perfect. Many pupils study a foreign language only two years; longer time is of course needed to approach mastery. At *any* point, however, the progress made in a language, when properly taught, will have positive value and lay a foundation upon which further progress can be built. It is evident therefore that the expectancy of values to be derived from language study must be relative to the amount of time and effort devoted to it.

The study of a foreign language, skillfully taught under proper conditions, provides a *new experience*, progressively enlarging the pupil's horizon through the introduction to a new medium of communication and a new culture pattern and progressively adding to his sense of pleasurable achievement. This experience involves:

1. The acquisition of a set of *skills*, which can become real mastery for professional use when practiced long enough. The international contacts and responsibilities of the United States make the possession of these skills by more and more Americans a matter of national urgency. These skills include:
   a. The increasing ability to *understand* a foreign language when spoken, making possible greater profit and enjoyment in such steadily expanding activities as foreign travel, business abroad, foreign language movies and broadcasts at home and abroad.
   b. The increasing ability to speak the foreign language in direct communication with people of another culture, either for business or for pleasure.
   c. The ability to *read* the foreign language with progressively greater ease and enjoyment, making possible the broadening effects of direct acquaintance with the recorded thoughts of another people, or making possible study for vocational or professional, *e.g.*, scientific or journalistic, purposes.
2. A new understanding of language, progressively revealing to the pupil the *structure* of language and giving him a new perspective on English.
3. A gradually expanding and deepening knowledge of a foreign country—its geography, history, social organization, literature, and culture—and, as a consequence, a better perspective on American culture and a more enlightened Americanism through adjustment to the concept of differences between cultures.

Progress in any one of these experiences or skills is relative to the emphasis given it in the instructional program and to the interests and aptitude of the learner. Lan-

guage *skills*, like all practical skills, may never be perfected and may be later forgotten, yet the enlarging and enriching results of the cultural experience endure throughout life.

This statement has had wide acceptance by the various national and regional associations and conferences of language teachers. The ideas were amplified in a report by the Committee on Foreign Language Instruction in Secondary Schools at the 1956 Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages—a report prepared on the basis of the committee members' professional experience and that of teachers in thirty-five secondary schools cited by colleges and universities for the excellence of the language preparation given their students. This Committee's recommendations emphasize the need for the five-fold objective of understanding the spoken language—speaking, reading, writing, and knowledge of the foreign civilization.

Curriculum Planning

How opportunities are utilized or, if need be, created, challenges the best thinking of any teaching and administrative staff. Even though the foreign language field is a "natural" for the cultivation of broad human understanding, and even though the complex of skills being developed provides an open door to accurate comprehension of other ways of thinking, language learning is an exceedingly complicated and many-sided process. The factors involved need to be carefully analyzed and reckoned with. To assure a reasonable chance of success, teachers and students alike must have a clear understanding of what the aim is, they must use effective materials and methods of teaching and learning, must apply themselves diligently to the task, and must have some means of evaluating the outcomes.

The same principles and many of the activities that have proved themselves in other learning experiences apply, of course, to a foreign language. Students learn to understand the spoken language by listening; to speak by speaking; to communicate in social situations by practice in communicating; to understand the nature of language and culture by firsthand acquaintance and experience with them; to know and appreciate more fully one's own language and culture by getting outside the familiar culture pattern, by seeing them in perspective from the vantage point of another language and culture. Unless these aims are a conscious, inherent part of the teaching process, the study of a foreign language does not *automatically* increase the ability to communicate successfully or to understand foreign cultures. This fact has been emphasized by various national and international groups (4,9,10) seeking to determine the part that languages play in developing international understanding.

Much confusion exists about what foreign language study can and cannot do to foster international understanding. In order for schools to provide suitable curriculum experiences in a language other than the mother tongue, this confusion needs to be cleared up. There are certain

broad elements of international understanding to which nearly all phases of the total school curriculum—including of course the teaching of a modern foreign language—can make valuable contributions: helping students obtain a realistic view of some of the world's problems; helping them see the United States in its relationship with other nations; helping them to appreciate the contributions of all peoples to the world community; helping them to value the services of international organizations devoted to better world understanding (*i.e.*, United Nations, Organization of American States), and the like. Then there are a number of specific contributions, some of them unique, which the teaching of a modern foreign language can make to an understanding of other people.

Working toward international understanding in a formal educational situation involves the cultivation of generous and informed attitudes through (1) factual knowledge of other peoples, (2) significant experience of other cultures, and (3) communication skills that increase knowledge and experience and prepare for personal foreign contacts. The first two, factual knowledge and significant experience, are possible to a considerable extent without a foreign language. The obvious advantage of foreign language study as a part of a total program that has cultivation of international understanding as one of its objectives is that it provides a *skill* making possible direct communication with another people in a world in which more and more Americans are meeting foreigners. And the more facility a student gains in a second language, thereby readying himself for contact with one other people, the more he increases his readiness for quickly familiarizing himself with any additional foreign language or culture which he encounters in his life's work. The foreign language can also provide a *content* and an *experience* which contribute uniquely to that acquired through other fields. Since language learning is not possible without subject matter, an appropriate, if not the natural, subject matter of a foreign language class is material which reveals the foreign culture. And since the language is an essential element in the culture, foreign language learning broadens the mental horizon and constitutes significant experience of the foreign way of life.

In this connection, one of the greatest barriers to international understanding is the normal tendency of human nature to react against the strange and unfamiliar, and foreign learning is probably the quickest and most direct method of making familiar what before was strange, by actually participating in and experiencing a different mode of thought. A person who can speak German, for example, may not like or admire the Germans, but he is no longer disliking them on instinctive grounds just because they sound queer.

The implications for curriculum planning are clear: (1) since language is a medium through which the value systems of a culture are expressed, the acquisition of language and of cultural understanding should be a simultaneous, not separate, process; (2) the language itself should be taught, not just information about the language; (3) it should be taught

in cultural context, not as an exercise in abstract reasoning. Each language class should take the students, so to speak, on a brief excursion into another way of life. In other words, foreign language teaching in the high schools today must contribute as fully as possible to the general education of boys and girls and to their ability to adjust to life in the modern world. The primacy of the communication approach seems right for the high school. Students who may later specialize in one or more foreign languages will take up technical linguistic subjects as they continue their study.

Another point of confusion has to do with proper standards for language work. To adapt foreign language teaching to the interest, maturity, and psychological needs of high-school students is not to lower the standards of achievement or to "water down" the subject matter. On the contrary, there is much evidence that high-school students can do solid work and that they do it with zest when their goals are clear, when they can note progress toward those goals, and when they can see the usefulness of the assigned work in relation to the goals. By the age of five and a half years, every normal child has learned the complex system of his native language—its structure, gestures, tone, and intonation—and, as his experience grows, vocabulary is added with relative ease. Although individuals learn at different rates and exhibit varying degrees of aptitude in self-expression, the power of all of them to communicate adequately proves that the underlying patterns composing the language are acquired by everyone in the culture. There is no basis, therefore, for believing that a high-school student cannot learn a second or a third language and no good theoretical reason to restrict foreign language study to the gifted. To pitch the level or the tempo of a course higher than is attainable by more than half the student body is not synonymous with high standards of achievement in terms of the stated objectives of modern foreign language teaching.

In the selection of curriculum experiences, then, teachers must see that students (1) undertake only as much as can be accomplished in the time available, (2) that they do well what they set out to do, (3) that they take stock frequently of their progress, (4) that they finish the course with a measure of satisfaction and, in addition, (5) carry with them an attractive vista of study to be continued or taken up again later. They will remember that language learning is a continuum and that no one should expect to "master" a second language in a few hours a week during the course of two or three years.

With the trend toward an earlier start in languages, many students upon entrance to the high school will have acquaintance with a second language and will have acquired varied abilities in speaking and understanding it. There is the greatest need to see that such pupils progress without starting over or waiting two or three years before they can continue their foreign language study. This means that the idea of "covering the course of study" each year, as often conceived, can no longer apply. It

should be noted, too, that there is a growing inclination by college language department to give entering students oral-aural and written placement tests, and the College Entrance Examination Board is now conducting experiments for the express purpose of adding a listening comprehension test to the regular foreign language "college board" achievement tests by about 1960. Obviously, the attempt to teach a complete course in formal grammar at the expense of practice in the use of the language must soon rate a low priority in the choice of learning activities. The exigencies of the situation seem certain to stimulate a type of curriculum planning more conducive to the attainment of the objectives as now defined.

Learning Activities

What are some of the learning activities in foreign language that prove useful, both for communication skills and growth in international understanding? Many are conducted in the language class room and laboratory, many in correlation with other departments in the school, others within the community or in larger relationships.

With Native Speakers

Real people in real situations requiring the use of the foreign language offer most stimulation, and even a few such occasions serve as powerful motivation for other less vitalizing experiences. In most schools it is becoming easier all the time to locate such visitors or people living in the community who can participate in foreign language classes or projects. Advance preparation through reading and discussion about the visitor's country and practice of essential phrases for greetings, questions, appreciation, and the like, as well as some follow-up lessons, will enhance the contribution of the native speaker.

In International Contacts

It would be ironical, however, in the question for natural occasions for using the language and getting to know the people, to overlook the resources of the school's environment. Intercultural misunderstanding and friction frequently have international repercussions; thus, in a very immediate sense, the cultivation of international understanding begins in the home community. Since some twenty million Americans speak a language other than English as their mother tongue, most communities, whether in a cosmopolitan city or rural area, present unexcelled opportunities for co-operation with foreign-language groups in civic and social programs (8). Many communities have foreign language radio broadcasts and foreign language newspapers. Intercultural understanding and an appreciation of the rich contributions made by people of foreign ancestry to the fabric of American life go hand in hand with the development of international understanding. Some school and community links in foreign language activities point to changed attitudes and behavior or to

heightened awareness of cultural ties. The following experience might apply in numbers of communities of the Southwest:

I teach two classes in Spanish for Mexican-American children only. The purpose of these classes is to teach them to read and write Spanish and to improve their spoken Spanish. English vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, and composition are emphasized as they relate to the Spanish language. It is a wonderful method of getting across American *mores* and of interesting these students in better scholastic achievement. I have spoken at a general faculty meeting about the nature of the Mexican-American student, some of his difficulties and needs. I suggested that teachers learn Spanish in order to bring about better rapport, and about forty members of our faculty are now taking an in-service course in Spanish given at our school. Many teachers and parents have come to me with problems about the Mexican-American children because I am a Spanish teacher and am interested in them.

Another teacher reported an incident involving discussion of a hilarious take-off of the foibles and exasperating traits of a different nationality. One of the language students injected a sobering remark, saying that he thought the book silly, that it used an easy form of humor and failed to give a true picture of the national characteristics. Others have noted that students become more tolerant of foreigners' mistakes in English because they see why certain mistakes are made. One story concerns the Italian shoemaker who always said things like "Your shoe, he is not ready" and "Close the door, she is open." A boy from the Italian class told the people in his neighborhood to stop laughing at him. Some teachers report recreational or seasonal activities in which language students collaborate with a foreign language group, as, for example, taking part in Christmas parties and choral singing of German societies in the community. In one town students attended church services conducted in Spanish for recently arrived Puerto Rican families. Even the most halting and imperfect attempts to speak generally go a long way to help bridge the chasm that divides person from person and group from group when they represent different languages and customs.

With Audio-Visual Materials

In the development of communication skills nothing can obviate the necessity for drill. But it is important, just as for other skills, that the practice be accurate, graded in difficulty, regularly scheduled, and interesting enough to hold the learner's attention and enlist his best effort. The classroom activities of listening to new sounds, imitating, memorizing, and trying to converse are greatly aided by the use of tape recordings, phonograph records, sound movies, slides and filmstrips, radio, and television. Mimeographed scripts and careful briefing are needed in the use of foreign language films and radio transcriptions.

Experiences of high schools that have introduced a language laboratory (*i.e.*, an installation of mechanical and electronic equipment designed to facilitate language learning by individuals or by groups) as part of the regular classwork reveals a decided upswing in oral-aural abilities, especially in the matter of helping students to make automatic

responses in the language. The student takes a "Copernican step" and the day he realizes that, he is responding directly in the language without the intermediate process of translating expressions to or from English. Getting the feel of thinking in another language gives him a tremendous boost toward achievement in two ways: the power to communicate adequately, even if in very restricted situations, and the break across the boundaries of a single culture.

A well-planned variety of class and laboratory drills makes for such thorough learning of essential speech patterns that study of grammar rules then comes about naturally as an observation or generalization of what the student already does through habit. The use of tape recordings for practice is particularly helpful because it introduces students to a greater number of voices and personalities than would normally occur in class meetings, and time is allowed for recording his own imitation of the model. When he hears himself and compares what he said with the model, he is convinced of the need for improvement and is not satisfied until his effort approximates the native speech. This is a far cry from the teacher's perplexing admonition of "No, say it this way," followed by a repetition of the same error as before. No doubt language laboratories will someday be considered as essential as science laboratories. The 1956 Northeast Conference report of the working committee (3) on teaching aids and techniques shows that a simple but effective language laboratory is now within the reach of most secondary schools.

Through Role Playing

Singing, reciting poetry, reading aloud, writing from dictation, and participating in dramatic performances are also excellent ways of inducing direct responses in the foreign language. The rhythm and melody of songs, as well as the spirit and thought of the lyric, facilitate pronunciation, natural speed, and intonation, at the same time producing a pleasurable reaction to the people and the language. Memorizing and acting out parts in dialogues, skits, and plays are invaluable ways of acquiring confidence in speaking, for this activity also lends itself to overlearning without boredom and thereby aids the ability to respond somewhat automatically and in the role of the native speaker. Some teachers try to make all learning activities appear to take place in the country whose language is studied. They do this on the theory that students gain through play acting a better understanding of the psychology of the people and learn more about the cultural similarities and differences, since information about the foreign environment and tradition is associated with particular situations of a given time and place. Emotional connotations of words become clearer too.

In Foreign Atmosphere

Color and authentic atmosphere are brought to the classroom through the use of maps, railway posters, airline calendars, costumed figurines, foreign publications (textbooks, children's stories, games, cookbooks, ser-

vice manuals for automotive mechanics, magazines, newspapers), exhibits (handicrafts, coins, flags, stamps, pictures of heroes, foreign place names in the United States, typical products, menu cards, theater programs, transportation networks, kodachrome views), and special bulletin board displays such as the following:

"Can you read the letter with the foreign stamp?"

"Now and later," featuring cartoons such as the student presently studying French and a soldier (later) interpreting for his buddies and the French washerwoman

"Don't miss these," announcing new travel books, foreign language movies, community programs, concerts

"The world beckons," illustrating need for foreign languages in transportation, trade, advertising, travel, industry, banking, social service, religious work, police services, librarianship, fine arts, engineering, *etc.*

Classes in larger cities sometimes borrow paintings of foreign artists from the art museum and exhibit them in the classroom, changing the picture several times a year in order to include portraits, landscapes, still life, and historical subjects. An idea that is popular in some schools is to arrange a corner of the classroom to represent a grocery store, using foreign labels for cans and other articles, and showing price lists in the currency of the country, the metric system of weights, and other features lending reality to the scene. Drills on numbers, articles, pronouns, and verbs are carried on in this setting through various kinds of conversational practice.

Through Current Events

Language departments sometimes have a news question box and devote a little time each week for students to draw and answer questions written in the language and having to do with current events pertinent to the subject; for example, the new record for flying time between New York and Buenos Aires, the return of Alberto Gainza Paz to *La Prensa,* the State visit of the president of Uruguay in Denver, lost missionaries in the jungle of Ecuador, student riots in Madrid, hurricane and floods in Tampico, earthquake in Peru, return of the swallows to Capistrano. Mispronunciations of proper names by radio announcers rarely escape the notice of these news-conscious pupils.

Another device is to put a headline in the foreign language on the blackboard every day with five or six key words, asking who can tell the news story. This activity develops the learners' power to utilize in a new context the phrases they know and to add meaningful items to their working vocabularies.

In Reading

A proverb or pithy saying placed on the board once or twice a week calls attention to an outlook on life and provokes comparisons with English maxims. Stories and other reading materials help develop a fellow feeling through allusions to ties of family and friends, love of country, the spirit of hospitality, anecdotes concerning animals, adventure, dan-

ger, *etc.* Biographies of national heroes or literary figures and episodes from history or literature can be dramatized following the plan of radio programs like "This Is Your Life," "You Are There," "I've Got a Secret," and the quiz shows.

Through the departmental or school library, a good assortment of foreign language magazines and at least one newspaper, together with foreign editions of United States periodicals, should be provided for their intensely interesting content and illustrations of life in the countries being studied. Students pour over such publications as *Realities* and *France-Illustration* from Paris, *Mundo Hispanico* from Madrid, *Hispanoamericano* from Mexico, and *Frankfurter Illustrierte* from Germany.

Supplementary reading in English can include translations of foreign literary classics, historical fiction, and travel books dealing with the culture being studied. Such reading, while more appropriately assigned in correlation with classes in world literature, English, or social studies, should be encouraged by foreign language teachers.

In Correlation with Other Subjects

Innumerable foreign language activities relate to other parts of the curriculum and can be carried out on a school-wide, city-wide, or larger basis. An intensive interest in one foreign culture is complementary to the whole field of social studies and touches every field in some way: art, music, dancing, sports, speech, world literature, English language, natural science, agriculture, home economics, business subjects, library. When, for example, students have units in social studies or English such as "Exploring New Worlds," "Friends from Other Lands," or "Hi, Neighbor! the foreign languages have many points of contact. Individual projects utilizing special interests may originate in or coincide with language study.

A noteworthy illustration of a state-wide program in which schools participate under the leadership of Spanish departments is the Pan American Student Forum, sponsored by the Good Neighbor Commission in Texas. Forum chapters from schools throughout the state send delegations to a two-day annual convention and participate in programs and contests including the following: one-act plays, choral singing, poetry and essay writing, group and solo dancing, declamations, "Information Please," meetings with Latin American scholarship students from the state colleges, handicraft and art work, scrapbook judging, elections and business meetings, luncheons, addresses by Latin American officials, and a *fiesta*. The Forum has had thirteen annual meetings of this nature.

Even international activities are sometimes carried on through language departments. Schools in places having town affiliations with towns in other countries are in a specially favored position to correlate studies with real life outside the United States. Students of French in a city which is twinned with one on France through LeMonde Bilingue (Paris), for example, can participate widely in activities involving many people of both countries.

Groups such as the Experiment in International Living (Putney, Vermont), American Friends Service Committee (Philadelphia), Brethren Service Commission (New Windsor, Maryland), Girl Scouts of the U. S. A., International Division (New York), and American Youth Hostels (New York) encourage students to acquire a functional knowledge of a foreign language and help provide opportunities for high-school youngsters to live and study abroad. These and other organizations, such as American Field Service International Scholarships (New York), Kiwanis International (Gainesville, Georgia), National Grange (Washington, D. C.), and the New York Herald Tribune Forum for high schools, help arrange for foreign secondary-school students to live with families in the United States and attend the local high school. Teenage exchanges are sponsored in some instances also by local chapters of the Lions and Rotary clubs, the U. S. Junior Chamber of Commerce, and various church groups.

Resources for Teachers

The information and services of broadest scope are those available through professional associations of language teachers and through newsletters or bulletins distributed in most cases gratis by committees on foreign language teaching in almost all of the forty-eight states. The Modern Language Association of America (6 Washington Square North, New York 3), through the Foreign Language Program, carries on a large volume of correspondence and maintains extensive files of research studies and other materials on important aspects of foreign language teaching in the United States. It participates in many national and international conferences and groups concerned with modern languages, and publishes the scholarly journal *PMLA* (Publication of the Modern Language Association).

Other national associations, devoted to the interests of particular languages, publish very useful journals, provide service centers and international correspondence bureaus, sponsor national contests and honor societies, exhibit textbooks of commercial publishers and audio-visual and other instructional materials at annual meetings, have affiliated local chapters, and set up working committees to study teaching problems. The names and addresses of these associations and their journals are as follows:

American Association of Teachers of French, *The French Review; Secretary*, Davidson College, Davidson, North Carolina

American Association of Teachers of German, *The German Quarterly; Secretary*, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

American Association of Teachers of Italian, *Italica; Secretary*, Roosevelt University, Chicago, Illinois

American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages, *The AATSEEL Journal; Secretary*, U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland

American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, *Hispania; Secretary*, DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana

The National Federation of Modern Language Teachers Association publishes *The Modern Language Journal,* largely pedagogical in nature and of interest to all modern language teachers. Subscriptions, eight issues a year, are available from the Business Manager, 7144 Washington Avenue, St. Louis 5, Missouri. Other important publications are *Language Learning,* a journal of applied linguistics, English Language Institute, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and the *Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics,* School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Washington, D. C.

Many items of importance to teachers of Spanish and Portuguese are available from the Pan American Union. (See *Hispania,* May 1956.) The various foreign information offices in New York and many of the transportation companies will send information and publications to teachers or school officials. Consultative services, reference lists of sources of teaching aids, and assistance in teacher exchanges are available from the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington 25, D. C.

Travel and study opportunities are listed in the language journals and in the following publications: *Handbook on International Study* (Institute of International Education, New York); *Summer Study in Latin America* (Pan American Union, Washington, D. C.) ; *Study Abroad,* International Handbook published annually by UNESCO; and summer school brochures from United States colleges and universities announcing workshops. inter-disciplinary seminars, foreign study tours, and other programs pertinent to the teaching of modern languages.

URGENT NEEDS

A consideration of modern language teaching as it is and as it ought to be in American high schools can lead to only one conclusion: some encouraging progress is being made but several important improvements are of immediate urgency.

1. *More and better qualified teachers.* Unless teachers have the ability to speak and understand the language and have firsthand acquaintance with the people and country, how can they guide their students toward the attitudes, skills, knowledge, understanding, and significant experiences to which their study of a modern language entitles them? The Foreign Language Program of the Modern Language Association has recently issued an official statement of qualifications for secondary-school teachers of modern foreign languages based on demonstrated abilities rather than course credits; it has received wide endorsement from leaders in foreign languages and professional education (7) . A large-scale movement to permit residence and study abroad, both for pre-service and in-service teachers, is of the utmost importance (1) . United States teachers need to get the feeling expressed recently by a visiting teacher from France:

> If I feel that my stay in the States has been profitable, it is because when I get back to France, I shall be in a position to pass on to my pupils such direct, vivid, or pictur-

esque information as I have had the opportunity to gather here. This information may still be very partial and limited. Yet Ford's assembly line, the speedways and drive-ins, the museums and the galleries, the drug-stores and jukeboxes, the American homes and their wife-saving gadgets, the lavishness of nature and the warm hospitality of men—all these have now taken for me a quality of concrete experience and actual reality that throws the mere bookish second-hand knowledge into the realm of bloodless shadows.

The preparation of modern language teachers should include a better background in American civilization and culture, including work in social psychology and cultural anthropology planned in correlation with linguistic studies. And, since our heritage is deeply rooted in Western European tradition, an introductory study of a language which is unrelated to the one taught would do much to overcome the undiscriminating enthusiasm sometimes exhibited by language teachers. Learning experience in the unrelated language would better prepare the teacher to convey the concept of how and why language shapes or governs thought. At least some knowledge of linguistic science is also a must. In other words, if teachers are ever to learn how to plan curriculum experiences in their field effectively and in collaboration with their colleagues in other fields, their own preparation must include some inter-disciplinary experience.

Greater professional spirit is likewise a necessary element in the high-school language teacher's equipment. Much productive work and much inspiration would result from attendance at annual meetings of the state, regional, and national language associations. At present an infinitesimal number of high-school teachers go to national meetings, work on state committees, carry on experimental research, contribute articles to journals, work to achieve good articulation with the elementary school and the college, produce new instructional materials, learn language laboratory techniques, and otherwise demonstrate their sense of responsibility to the profession. Should not the local school board give some material encouragement to high-school teachers who are disposed to attend annual meetings of professional associations or serve on working committees?

2. *More schools offering modern languages.* The high-school years have been described as a linguistic wasteland for an alarming proportion of students, and with some justification. A study conducted in 1955 by the Modern Language Association reveals that fifty-six per cent of our public high schools fail to offer any modern foreign language, that only 14.3 per cent of the total high-school population is currently enrolled in a modern foreign language class (*PMLA*, September 1955). Along with measures to remedy this situation, it might be advisable for a few of the larger cities to provide a specialized high school devoted to the teaching of foreign languages and cultures.

3. *A longer sequence of study.* Students with special interest and aptitude should be able to continue the language long enough to make real proficiency possible. The customary two-year high school program in modern language is unsuited to the needs of student today.

4. *Opportunity to Study Asiatic, African, and East European languages.* Spanish and French are taught in all of the 41 states for which enrollment figures are available; German is taught in 32 states, Italian in 8. Polish, Greek, Hebrew, Russian, Portuguese, Norse, Chinese, and Swedish are available to an extremely limited extent. Eleven secondary schools are known to have classes in Russian, for example, and one offers spoken Chinese. Many current problems in international relations center in Asia and other areas that are little known in the United States; they are likely to be long with us, and their solution will require an ability to reach a meeting of minds with peoples whose traditions and psychology are almost a complete blank to most Americans. Will the present high-school generation be better prepared than their parents to maintain amicable relations with these areas of the world?

5. *Instructional materials designed to develop skills in communication and cultural insights.* New texts, kinescopes, wall pictures, and many kinds of materials are needed, pooling the best thinking and experience of the profession. Language laboratory facilities, to mention another necessity, are few and far between. Two years ago one of our linguistic scientists stated: "The time is past when a school can boast of possessing language laboratory facilities. The time is at hand when those who are lacking such facilities will have to find some explanation."

6. *More interdepartmental planning.* In the interest of economy, efficiency, and meaningful, integrated content, modern language instruction needs to be closely meshed with that in other fields.

7. *More research and evaluative criteria.* There are many questions that remain unanswered in the field of language learning and tests and measurements. Some significant research in psycho-linguistics has already been done and more is in progress. Modern language teachers need to assimilate and disseminate the results of such research and try to apply the best information available to the construction of measures by which they can evaluate progress in such abilities as speaking and listening comprehension, desirable attitudes toward other cultural groups, and growth. Travel, for example, is believed to have some relation to better international understanding. Modern language study ought to motivate a student to travel, prepare him to profit more from the experience when the opportunity comes, and fit him to add his bit toward the creation of a more favorable attitude abroad toward the United States citizens. How, therefore, do we judge to what extent this is happening? In the absence of adequate measuring devices, teachers should keep better anecdotal records and collect more samples of student and community reaction to apparently successful modern language teaching.

In summary, modern languages for modern living are beginning to be taught in a new key—one attuned to an awareness of the ways in which language study can lead to cultural understanding—and the new key will be recognized more and more generally as greater numbers of teachers and

students are prepared to feel at home in a second language. Clearer objectives and more direct ways of achieving them have been emerging in the wake of recent advances in linguistic science (2) and with the trend toward inter-departmental or inter-disciplinary approaches to language study (5). The improvements in progress and those remaining to be made coincide with the growing need for language proficiency in the national interest (6) and with the wide-spread conviction that through language we get a personal view of peoples that we cannot get in any other way.

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